

Fault Lines of European Migration

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Divinsky, Boris, and Tatiana Zachar Podolinska, et al. 2018. *Globe in Motion: Patterns of International Migration: Similarities and Differences*. Bratislava: Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology SAS, Marenčin PT., s. r. o. pp 216. ISBN 978-80-970975-7-8. <https://doi.org/10.31577/2018.9788097097578>

The 21st century is the “century of migration.” (p. 8). This book attempts to encapsulate this reality of the modern world in ten chapters covering a range of topics. This compendium of literature in the field of migration research comes in the wake of what has been popularly called “the refugee crisis,” wherein over 25 million refugees have fled and sought asylum. Syria, Afghanistan, and South Sudan became the top three countries of origin of most of the refugees (p. 24). By 2017 approximately 1.3 million of those refugees had been granted asylum in the European Union (p. 54). In relation to Europe, the mammoth task of both hosting and integrating groups from diverse cultural backgrounds spurred policymakers and scholars to action, to understand the perceptions of the host as well as the migrant community in order to find amiable solutions. The central aim of the book is to compare and contrast the policies, practices and attitudes within the EU, with an exception of a case study in Canada. Such an examination is important in light of a wide-spread reactionary response to migration, generating anti-immigrant rhetoric among EU citizens who have largely begun to occupy themselves with questions of terrorism and migration, relegating economic issues to the background (p. 25). However, it should be mentioned that the reaction to immigration within different EU states has not been uniform and depends on various factors including the size and composition of the migrant population (p. 46).

In the book’s ten chapters certain themes are explored using case studies from various EU states. The first chapter serves as an informative starting point into the complicated world of migration. Tatiana Zachar Podolinska charts the journey of global migration providing readers with relevant statistics from across the globe. The author underlines the key concepts, theories (Spencer, Durkheim, Parsons

and Castles), models (Sokolowicz & Lishchynskyy, 2018 p. 45–65), trends, patterns and challenges of migration. Overall, the author provides a significant amount of information which is condensed for the “layperson’s consumption.” Through the sub-headings “politicisation of migration,” the author succinctly captures the broader reasons underpinning the present scholarship. But migration has always been politicised, has it not? In calling itself global in approach (‘Globe in Motion’) and heterogeneous in representation (p. 8) while only covering five countries (almost all European) namely Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Hungary and Canada, the book regrettably presents itself as myopic with a rather Eurocentric vision that begets the observation of pursued by postcolonial scholars such as Said. Has migration suddenly become political because it finally – perhaps negatively so – impacts Europe? In seeking an answer to this question, the reader is left much to desire. Throughout the book, while the migrant is an impersonal, invisible “Other” and the Muslim migrant is the M-word that but rarely finds an utterance, the politics of the respective countries continue to find a solution to the migrant problem. Admittedly, addressing this historical background of migration is not one of the core objectives of the book. A tacit acknowledgment of the same could have assured the reader of a consistent self-awareness of the scholarship.

In the second chapter, author Antoine Savary discusses the various integration policies for third-country nationals as proposed and followed by the EU over the years. The process of integration is shaped by the size of the migrant population in a receiving EU member state. Furthermore, access to the labour market, an indispensable part of the integration process, is based on factors such as age, gender, and language skill proficiencies of migrants. Accounting for these complexities, the author invites the policymakers to consider development of integration measures as an opportune investment in the long-term period to uphold the economic competitiveness of the EU (p. 47). The third chapter, penned by Rinus Penninx, takes the discussion of policy formation forward by discussing the stakeholders of the aforementioned policies. The author has created a heuristic model which traces the relationship between different stakeholders across different levels-individual, organisational and institutional. Moreover, these stakeholders make provisions to analyse policy measures and practices by locating their relevance to different parts of the heuristic model to dimension it targets, which actors/parties are involved, and how they interact with one another (p. 74).

Both concerning Slovakia and complementary in nature, chapters four and seven will be covered together. Reflecting on Slovakia’s approach to migration, Jaroslav Chlebo points out ‘the trap of overoptimistic interpretation of the possible positive migration effects’ arguing how fiscal contributions of migrants may not offset the economic, social and environmental challenges faced by their interaction with the receiving societies. While a fair argument, given how the receiving community in question – (Slovakia) is at a nascent stage when it comes to immigration

practices, the author does not delve into those specific challenges. For example, an overwhelmingly Christian population (over 70%) in the face of incoming Muslim migrants, is an issue which must not be downplayed. A deeper analysis of Slovakian society is undertaken by Olga Gyarfasova in her chapter regarding how the Slovaks perceive the New 'Others.' She outlines how Slovakian society is riddled with xenophobic and anti-immigrant attitudes, reflected in a study conducted among young citizens of Visegrad countries where Slovak young adults – at 75 percentage level – expressed strongest resistance to providing refuge to victims of military conflict or political persecution (p. 146). Discussing Slovaks' entitlement of their own emigration to other European states and subsequent social benefits in those other EU countries, this chapter challenges the complaints meted out in chapter four regarding EU burdening its members with unfair quotas and other demands relating to migration. To quote Gyarfasova, 'European community is a two-way path.'

In chapter five, Howard Duncan examines the case of Canadian exceptionalism in regards to immigration policies. Simply put, immigration as an issue continues to find support in the Canadian public sphere because of how well the state manages it. A singular state body regulates the number and composition of migrants, keeping in mind the interests of the Canadian public, and rested upon a strong constitutional ethos that celebrates multiculturalism. Canadian exceptionalism redefines integration to mean participation in society without having to acquire the host culture. Canada, with its isolated geography and a highly militarised neighbor (USA), finds it easy to regulate migration. There are lessons that can be learned from Canada's policy of opting for diversity over imagined national identity as is the case with some European countries.

In chapter six, William Woods examines the dilemma faced by UK policymakers when conceiving policies to identify and protect human-trafficking victims while also striving to create a "hostile" environment for illegal migrants, some of whom may be the aforementioned human trafficking victims oblivious to their situation. The author identifies that militarised borders and impossibly stringent migration criteria serves to alienate people, pushing them into immigrating into the country illegally which remains their only resort.

Chapter eight and nine share a common theme of technology – or harnessing technology to be precise – 'the study of migration has become a study of technologies.' (p. 153). As mentioned in the foreword, this volume is the result of an international conference aimed at understanding the importance of information in the process of integration. Against this backdrop, the two chapters seek to communicate the gravity of facilitating integration by providing migrants with access to 'right information at the right time.' (p. 148). Both authors situate the experiences of migrants in reality with government officials where the former are given contradictory, ambiguous or partial information which get them entangled in a harrowing bureaucratic loop. As a solution, the authors cite the increasing proficiency entailed

in use of ICT technology; the user-friendly interface of relevant apps, websites and information portals which can aid and assist in integration of migrants.

In the last chapter of the volume, Boris Divinsky undertakes a detailed analysis of the widely controversial Soros Migration Plan (SMP; three editions) as proposed by Hungarian-born American business magnate George Soros. While the author also underlines proposals on how to manage the refugee influx of 2015 by public officials such as Merkel, Macron and Orban, they do not specify the reasons for choosing Soros from other non-public entities. Deemed dangerous by the far-right and anti-immigration group, the SMP – based on its third version – makes seven prominent demands which includes admission of a stipulated quota of refugees to the EU every year, funding for a comprehensive migration policy and building an EU-wide migration mechanism, to name a few. Barring the shortcomings of the plan, it should be considered aspirational in its approach insofar as it leads to a creation of a standard European mechanism to engage with the ever-burgeoning issue of migration. This mechanism accounts for issues concerning relocation, quotas and the nature of migration (trafficking) as indicated in accounts of different EU countries in the other chapters. In a manner of speaking, this chapter serves as a telling conclusion, for the lack of one.

Secure in the knowledge of a topic with a very broad scope, *Patterns of International Migration: Similarities and Differences* takes the liberty of speaking to a variety of cases, becoming a double-edged sword, resulting in a lack of cohesiveness between the chapters. The reader scrambles to look for patterns themselves with exceptional cases and themes of the UK and Canada throwing one off the trajectory. While one emerges with understanding of certain patterns of migration in a few European countries, the book fails to realize the globe in its title. Is there any similarity or difference in migratory patterns in the West and the East (for example the case of Tibetan migration to India)? If written in service of European policy understanding, are there any lessons to be learned from comparison with the East? Nevertheless, in its outreach, the book effectively demonstrates a comparison of migration patterns within the EU, invoking policymakers to address the contradictions and obstacles inherent in their approach.

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